

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA, PFOR, CVIS, CASC, UR

SUBJECT: LOCAL TRAVEL BY ESKIMOS IN BERING STRAITS

AREA: AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE

1. AS US-SOVIET RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED, AMERICAN ESKIMOS OF LITTLE DIOMEDE AND ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS HAVE DISPLAYED GROWING INTEREST IN REINSTITUTING PROCEDURES WITH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM LEGALLY TO VISIT THEIR RELATIVES RESIDING IN THE ADJACENT SOVIET TERRITORY OF BIG DIOMEDE ISLAND AND THE CHUKOTSK PENINSULA WITHOUT BEING SUBJECT TO NORMAL PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS. IN RECENT YEARS THESE ESKIMOS HAVE MET IN A BRIEF SUMMER PERIOD IN SKIN BOATS ON THE INTERNATIONAL DATELINE.

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2. PROCEDURES FOR VISITS BY US ESKIMOS TO SOVIET

TERRITORY EXISTED FOR 10 YEARS. IN 1938, AT SOVIET INITIATIVE, THE US AND USSR AGREED IN AN EXCHANGE OF NOTES (BEING POUCHED) TO A SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE FOR TEMPORARY VISITS BY AMERICAN ESKIMOS TO ADJACENT SOVIET TERRITORY. THIS AGREEMENT REMAINED IN EFFECT UNTIL 1948 WHEN IT WAS TERMINATED BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT.

3. EMBASSY SHOULD APPROACH MFA TO PROPOSE AN AGREE-

MENT FOR RECIPROCAL VISITS OF AMERICAN ESKIMOS OF LITTLE DIOMEDE AND ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS AND SOVIET ESKIMOS OF BIG DIOMEDE ISLAND AND THE CHUKOTSK PENINSULA. PROCEDURES UNDER THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN FORCE FROM 1938 TO 1948. TEXT OF NOTE FOLLOWS SEPTEL. INGERSOLL

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